

**Meeting Minutes of  
The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health  
1:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 8, 2010**

The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health met at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2010, in Barry Hall's Conference Room 126, 14 Harrington Road, Cranston, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Chair, Richard Leclerc, Sandra DelSesto, Scotti DiDonato, Mark Fields, James Gillen, Reed Cosper, Joseph Le, Peter Mendoza and Darlene Price

Ex-Officio Members Present: Denise Achin, Department of Education (DOE); Frank Pace, Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF); Deborah Florio, Department of Human Services (DHS); Craig Stenning, Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH); Fred Friedman, Department of Corrections (DOC)

Guests: Ian Knowles, RICARES & Data of RI and Richard Antonelli, MHA-RI

MHRH Staff: Charles Williams and Corinna Roy

Once a quorum was established, the Chair, Richard Leclerc, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. After introductions were conducted, Richard Leclerc asked if there were any comments on the minutes of May 13. Motion made to accept by Peter Mendoza seconded by Scotti DiDonato. Leclerc asked if there was any discussion of the minutes. Sandra DelSesto commented that on page 4 under updates, insurance for parents with children removed, it was her understanding that she had made a motion that a letter be sent to Craig Stenning, Patricia Martinez and Gary Alexander and that someone else also suggested that it go to Elena Nicollela. She stated that it was her understanding that it was a motion that was approved although it did not come across that way in the minutes and the letter was not sent though it was drafted. Richard Leclerc asked if she wanted to amend the minutes. DelSesto made a motion to amend the minutes which was seconded by Reed Cosper. Leclerc asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. A motion to approve the Minutes of May 11, 2010 as amended was made by Scotti DiDonato, seconded by Mark Fields. Richard Leclerc called for a vote to approve the minutes, all were in favor and the amended minutes were approved.

**1. Subcommittee Reports:**

**Transitional Youth.....Denise Achin**

Denise Achin said that there is nothing to report on the Transitional Youth Committee as they have not met since the last Governor's Council meeting. Their next meeting will be on 6/25.

**Recovery-Oriented System of Care Committee Report ..... Sandra DelSesto, Ian Knowles**

Corinna Roy handed out copies of the report to the attendees. Sandra DelSesto said that this report is very similar to the one that went out to the Council via e-mail. It is organized into four areas and completion dates have been added instead of priorities, which they felt was ambitious but realistic. Bullets were comments from the group and numbered items were action steps. On behalf of herself, Ian Knowles and Chaz Gross she thanked the other members of the steering committee who were the co-chairs of the workgroups; Marie Waldeck, Fred Trapassi, Judy Gorman, Jim Gillen and Jim McNulty. She noted that the beginning discusses their process and guiding principles. Craig Stenning asked Ian how long it took the group to put this together and he stated that they began the process in October. Leclerc asked who was responsible for the action steps. Knowles said that it was recommendations to the Director per the Director's request, there was no explicit responsibility. Leclerc asked that the group review the report and vote on it at the next meeting. He also thanked Knowles and DelSesto for the report. DelSesto said the group would meet with Director Stenning to discuss the report if needed.

## **2. Letter to the Legislature regarding the Budget/restructuring.....Richard Leclerc**

Leclerc said that the next item on the agenda was the letter to the legislature regarding budget cuts and restructuring of the Departments under the secretariat. Individual letters were sent to each legislator. He thanked Corinna and Liz Earls for helping with this letter. He asked if there were any questions about the letter. Reed Cospers asked for clarification of cuts and restorations. Leclerc explained that of the 4.4 million dollars cut, one million dollars had been restored to the budget. Stenning said there were three line items in the budget that applied to mental health services and the House Finance Committee restored one of those three which was a total restoration of \$1.1 million. The line item restored coverage for psychiatric rehabilitation. He noted that the \$1.1 million restored was part of Chairman Costantino's final recommendations in the 2011 budget. Rich Leclerc said that these are services that are billed under a certain Medicaid code which includes vocational services, leisure time activity and psychiatric rehab services.

## **3. DOC Data Elements.....Fred Freidman**

Leclerc next introduced Fred Freidman from the DOC who present DOC Data Elements. Fred Freidman said that before he spoke on the DOC Data Elements he wanted to share an article about a study done by the Treatment Advocacy Center with the National Sheriffs' Association which was published in May of 2010. This report compared the number of mentally ill persons in jail and prisons versus public and private psychiatric facilities by state. He handed out the executive summary to the council members. He pointed out that Rhode Island came out number 19 in the country with 31 states lower but that the data may be somewhat skewed as the number of mentally ill in prisons is based on an a national estimate of 16%. He said that the study did show that the states that spent the least on mental health services had more people in prison.

Freidman also gave out the Annual Commitment & Release Report for CY 2009 with an overview of data from the DOC to give members a perspective on the numbers of persons coming in and coming out of the prison system. He said that he remembered coming to this council a couple of years ago when there was an increase in people coming into the prison and lots of resources were being spent on the prison population which caused some consternation. He said that there have been several programs enacted and the population has been decreasing over the past few years. As of yesterday, the population at the DOC was 3,368. He noted that Cornina had asked him how many of the 3,368 were veterans and only 74 people on the way into the ACI told them that they were veterans. Twenty-four are in intake, fifty in the jailed population. He gave some data on the medication costs by disease state per quarter and pointed out that the psychotropic medications are a cost driver closely followed by HIV medications. Reed Cospers asked about opioid replacement medication. Freidman replied that this was a contract medication through CODAC and thus was not included in the medication cost. In the last quarter psychiatric medications were 38% of DOC's pharmaceutical costs. Director Stenning asked if there was a way of figuring the number of prescription medications covered since the HIV and psychiatric medication are also more expensive than some of the medications. Fred said that is why he broke out the atypical second generation medications most of which are not generic. Ninety percent of the prescriptions are generic and 10% are not generic but the cost is reversed with a small amount of medication costing the most. He also noted that they do go off formulary whenever the clinician feels it is necessary but that they are also required to contain costs. Fields asked if it would lower the cost if the DOC had its own pharmacy. Fred replied that it was contracted out and managed by the URI School of Pharmacy and that this has saved several hundred thousands dollars. DeSesto asked if the percentage of woman receiving psychiatric medications was higher than men. He responded that it was higher but that the data was skewed because of the quick turnover of women in the prison. He said that in high security there were 20 people on

psychiatric medications; with a broad spectrum of disorders including mood disorders, adjustment disorders, schizoaffective disorders. This is the same spectrum that is seen in the female population. He also addressed substance abuse stating that DOC uses the Texas Christian University Drug Screen. One of the questions is “in the past 12 months how much have you used certain drugs.” In the last report, which would be last year’s data, the drug of choice was alcohol. He said that he hoped to report in more detail the next time. Fred said they use the TCU along with the Parole Assessment to help determine who goes into treatment. He said that many of the people at the ACI end up there after having been in treatment multiple times. Peter Mendoza noted that there were many people who reported marijuana as their drug of choice and asked if Freidman expected that number to decrease if marijuana is decriminalized. Stenning said that these figures underscore the stigma connected to substance abuse as there is a tendency to associate substance abuse with heroin, cocaine, crack, etc. and we continue to develop policies and tax structures that condone alcohol and yet it is the most predominant cause of people acting out, becoming involved in domestic violence and crimes etc. Cosper said that you can probably find a closer relation to alcohol and arrest than marijuana and heroin and arrest. Freidman said that he would have better data on the diagnoses when he presents to the group next. Leclerc asked how this 16% figure compares to last year as the 16% figure was the same last year. Freidman said that as he did not have the ability to have hard data in the past so he has relied on this number.

In terms of treatment, as of today there are 228 people in treatment in the spectrum of programs throughout DOC’s facilities and there is constantly a waiting list. He said there is a program in minimum security in conjunction with the Providence Center with 45 beds and this contract is part of the Corrections Options legislation. The Department received an extra \$300,000 which was split in half to provide services within the facility and half is for follow-up treatment in the community.

He also noted that they had just submitted a grant to the Office of Justice Programs through the Department of Corrections with the backing of the of the State’s Mental Health and Substance Abuse Authority to develop a program for targeting offenders with co-occurring disorders. He said that he proposed setting up a separate living mod, one of the smaller mods at the intake center, where about 48 offenders would be housed. They are looking for people with co-occurring disorders, who have come back into the ACI due to probation violations, or people sentenced to 90 days or less or those 5-10 people who come in each week with an order from the judge to be remanded to the Department of Corrections until a bed is found in the community. He said the grant was limited to \$300,000 per year for two years which will help but is not the full amount needed.

Fred took questions from the group after which Rich thanked him for putting together such a comprehensive and interesting presentation. In answer to a question he said that some of the information is available on the web. Corinna asked if the report put together was available electronically and Fred said that he would get it to Corinna for distribution.

Craig added his appreciation for the report and said that as Fred mentioned MHRH’s support for DOC’s grant application supports the fact that the relationship between the two departments is the best it has been in any time in his recollection. The fact that planning can be done when people are in prison as well as in the community is probably unique to the last couple of years.

#### **4. Updates from MHRH: Craig Stenning**

Stenning reported that a budget is now in place and that it did not get worse than it was but there is always a concern that there will be additional cuts during the process given the State’s dire straits. And, as was mentioned, House Finance did replace \$1 million back in the budget and did not take any new cuts out of

Substance Abuse. He said he is now faced with the task of preparing this year's budget. Craig said that he had met in the morning with Liz Earls from the RI Council to talk about strategies for the 2011 budget and will meet with the DD group after the council meeting. He said that an email would probably go out on Wednesday that would describe the budget in general terms.

Craig quipped that the letter sent by the Council to the legislature got \$1 million dollars restored to the budget but said that in terms of the consolidation issue that was mentioned in the letter has not been resolved. A hearing was held on that bill but as of today there has not been any action on it.

Stenning handed out copies of an article in today's Providence Journal about the certification ceremony that was held Tuesday jointly sponsored by the RI Council of Community Mental Health Organizations and MHRH. This was the graduation exercise for 13 police officers who completed the Crisis Intervention training program that we initiated two years ago. It is the second graduation that we have had. The highlight of the program was when Richard Crino and Robin Winslow, who designed the program, described over a dozen different situations that have occurred in RI involving a trained and certified police officer who encounters an individual exhibiting some symptoms of mental illness in the past three to six month with positive outcomes. By everyone's testimony, if these situations had happened three or four years ago the outcome probably would have been extremely negative. In each situation the individuals were taken for treatment rather than being arrested or injured in any way, and the officers were not injured in any way. Like a crime that is averted, these incidents are not typically reported. He said this program is being expanded by a day when it begins in September. He said that Judge LaFazia spoke again about her desire to pay more attention to the issues of mental illness and substance abuse. This was a program the RICCMHO applied for Federal dollars to support, but the application was not awarded so MHRH reallocated funding in recognition of the importance of this program.

He also passed out an article by Bob Kerr which was a case study of an individual who had a lengthy history of time at the ACI. She was discharged from the Women's Prison with funding for substance abuse treatment and wraparound supports through the Access to Recovery Program (ATR). There is an error in the article stating that ATR is being eliminated as a budget cut but that it is not accurate. The Federal Grant funding is about to run out but the Department has applied for another round of funding. He also noted that the stigma of addictions and criminal backgrounds was apparent in the negative blog comments he found when he went to the Providence Journal website to print the article.

He handed out a third article, a column by Kathleen Heren who is the executive director of the Alliance for Better long-term Care. This article talks about the testimony Stenning gave at House Finance in regards to not forgetting the history of abuse and maltreatment of persons with the Developmental Disabilities and making sure that the same mistakes are not made again. The report she cites in this article is one written about the Ladd Center; however you could write the same report in regards to mental health on these grounds. An excellent column to remind us how far we have come but how quickly we could go back to those days.

Stenning reported on an article written about a press conference held about three weeks ago by a group out of Providence entitled "Closing the Treatment Gap" that is looking at those who could benefit from substance abuse treatment and those actually receiving it. They have made a number of recommendations dealing with Drug Court and dealing with SBRT as well as re-entry programs.

The Director said that he met with the Prevention Taskforce Coalition Association this past week. They would like to have an additional representative on this council so I explained to them what the process was to get people appointed.

Stenning said that he was proud to say that A.T. Wall and he have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which was one of the outcomes of some work that the Mental Health Association did to look at the transition of people between the two Departments. He said he will make a copy of that available so it can be sent out with the minutes.

Richard Leclerc asked if there were any questions for the Director. Ken Fields asked how Craig felt the meeting with DD would go in the afternoon. Given that it will be a discussion about a \$7 million cut from the system it will be a challenge.

Stenning said that he wanted to give a plug for the Waterfire recovery event planned. He said that the committee has done an incredible job and Jim Gillen has exceeded the prior years' successes. The National Guard is on board for the event, 93 PRO FM will be there for a few hours and A+E seems to be interested in the event as it carries a show on interventions and one of the previous show's and one of its previous interventees will be performing at the event. There are four major sponsors at this time; Gateway, Phoenix House, Providence Center and The Homestead Group – Seven Hills.. He said that what they are doing is unique to RI in that Director Stenning and the Department is involved and that is not done in any other state, as well as the strong involvement of DD and now the involvement of the National Guard. He invited the group to visit McAuley house for the event's kickoff, sponsor the event if possible, or volunteer. Joseph Le asked if he had gotten anything from the United Way. Jim said that he hadn't but that the United Way may be sponsoring the 9/11 Waterfire as a major sponsor.

**5. Updates from DCYF: .....Frank Pace**

Richard Leclerc asked Frank Pace if he had any updates. He said that the only update is that DCYF has updated the regulations for licensing of residential child care facilities and that became effective June 7, 2010 and it was the first time this had been updated since 1987. This information is available on the website.

**6. Updates from DHS .....Deb Florio**

Deb Florio said that Sharon had report the prior month that RITE CARE reprocurement is poised for posting by the Department of Administration and that this should be up on the website in a day or two. A notice will be sent to a variety of people when that occurs. She said that they are hoping to go live on September 1. And as part of the budget WIC (Women's Infants Children) will be moving from the Department of Health to the Department of Human Services. This program is joining EI. Denise Achin asked if staff was moving along with the program. Deb commented that this is always the question but it is yet to be seen.

**7. Path Grant.....Corinna Roy**

Corinna said that the executive summary from the PATH Application is in the packet she provided. She said it is a formula grant which means the Department gets the grant as long as they apply. The amount is \$300,000 which is the minimum allotment that smaller states get for this grant and it is designed to provide services, particularly street outreach, for homeless people with serious mental illness. Roy said it was re-RFP'd in 2007 and Riverwood Mental Health was awarded the bulk of grant at that time in large degree due to an independent evaluation that demonstrated that their Housing First Program was very successful with this population.

She presented a newspaper article from 6/2/2010 that described a person with a prior addiction to heroin who has been very successful in the Housing First Program run by Riverwood. One of the points of the article is that it is a cost saver. She mentioned that Don Boucher who is on the back of the page is the Department's primary contact for this program. Craig said the decision to re-RFP was a very controversial decision, but that it has proved to be one of the best decisions made by the Department. He pointed out information on the back of the article, that for the 48 individuals served the prior cost to serve them when they were homeless was \$31,617 and with the program the cost is \$22,778 a savings of close to \$10,000 per client. Craig said that all of these articles are linked on the MHRH webpage.

Corinna said that Jim brought in copies of the Street Sights Paper. Darlene Price said that Street Sights is a free paper produced by homeless or previously homeless persons about homeless persons and the homeless service system.

**7. Old/New Business.....Richard Leclerc**

Rich Leclerc asked if there was any old or new business. Corinna said that we are gearing up for the Mental Health Block Grant and should get our Governor's Council Sub-Committee to meet to discuss unmet needs and any other part of the application they choose to address. Leclerc said notices should be sent out inviting people to participate. The committee will meet once or twice in the summer and look at accomplishments and priorities from last year and make recommendations about what to include this year.

Leclerc said that last month there had been confusion about work that had been done on the RITE CARE coverage for parents whose children had been removed. He asked if anyone had found any information on this matter. He said that he would send the letter to key Department heads asking them to move this forward and hopefully this will jog something.

**8. Next Meeting: Thursday July 8 at 8:30AM, Room 126.....Richard Leclerc**

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.